

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus comprising excitation light emitting means for projecting excitation light onto a target tissue, and illuminating light emitting means for projecting illuminating light onto the target tissue, and

fluorescent-light image obtaining means for obtaining a fluorescent-light image formed of the fluorescent-light emitted from the target tissue upon irradiation thereof by the excitation light, and

a normal-image obtaining means for obtaining a normal-image formed of the illuminating light reflected from the target tissue upon irradiation thereof by the illuminating light, further comprising

a contact detecting means for detecting that the distal end of excitation light emitting means has come into contact with the target tissue, and

an excitation light emission controlling means for controlling, in response to the detection signal of said contact detecting means, the output of the excitation light emitted from the excitation light emitting means.

2. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein

the excitation light emission control means is a current controlling means for controlling the current occurring in the excitation light source.

3. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein

 said excitation light emission controlling means causes the emission of the excitation light from the excitation light emitting means to stop.

4. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein

 said excitation light emission controlling means causes the excitation light from the excitation light emitting means to be emitted at an intensity below a predetermined value.

5. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus comprising excitation light emitting means for projecting excitation light onto a target tissue, and illuminating light emitting means for projecting illuminating light onto the target tissue, and

 fluorescent-light image obtaining means for obtaining a fluorescent-light image formed of the fluorescent-light emitted from the target tissue upon irradiation thereof by the excitation light, and

a normal-image obtaining means for obtaining a normal-image formed of the illuminating light reflected from the target tissue upon irradiation thereof by the illuminating light, further comprising

 a distance parameter detecting means for detecting a parameter correlating the distance between the distal end of excitation light emitting means and the target tissue, and

 an excitation light emission controlling means for controlling, based on the parameter detected by the distance parameter detecting means, the output of the excitation light emitted from the excitation light emitting means.

6. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5,
wherein

 the parameter is based on the light intensity of the fluorescent-light image obtained by the fluorescent-light image obtaining means.

7. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 6,
wherein

 the parameter is based on the pixel values of the entire image or a predetermined portion of a fluorescent-light image obtained by the fluorescent-light image obtaining means.

8. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5,
wherein

the parameter is the light intensity of the normal-image obtained by the normal-image obtaining means.

9. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 8, wherein

the parameter is based on the pixel values of the entire image or a predetermined portion of a normal-image obtained by the normal-image obtaining means.

10. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5, further comprising

reference-light emitting means for projecting a reference-light onto the target tissue, and reflected-light image obtaining means for obtaining a reflected-light image reflected from the target tissue upon irradiation thereof by the reference-light, wherein

said parameter is based on the light intensity of the reflected-light image obtained by the reflected-light image obtaining means.

11. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein

the parameter is based on the pixel values of the entire image or a predetermined portion of a reflected-light image obtained by the reflected-light image obtaining means.

12. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5,
wherein

the excitation light emission control means is a current controlling means for controlling
the current occurring in the excitation light source.

13. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5,
wherein

said excitation light emission controlling means causes the emission of the excitation
light from the excitation light emitting means to stop.

14. (original): A fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as defined in claim 5,
wherein

said excitation light emission controlling means causes the excitation light from the
excitation light emitting means to be emitted at an intensity below a predetermined value.

15. (previously presented): The fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as
defined in claim 1, wherein a strength of the excitation light is controlled at the same time as the
strength of the illuminating light.

16. (previously presented): The fluorescent-light image obtaining apparatus as
defined in claim 5, wherein a strength of the excitation light is controlled at the same time as the
strength of the illuminating light.

17. (new): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the contact detecting means is attached to the distal end of the excitation light emitting means for imaging the target tissue and emits a signal to the light emission controlling means upon contact with the target tissue.